

Thank you all. Good luck. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:19 p.m. on the South Grounds at the White House.

Remarks at a Meeting With Surgeon General Nominee Henry Foster and an Exchange With Reporters

May 26, 1995

The President. I want to thank the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee for endorsing the nomination of Dr. Foster to be Surgeon General and for doing it in a bipartisan fashion. I'd also like to say a special word of appreciation to the people of Tennessee who stood with him and especially to the young children in the "I Have A Future" program who came up here and talked about how he helped to turn their lives around, helped to convince them to stay in school, to keep working, to turn away from drugs, from teen pregnancy, from the other problems that bother so many of our children.

This is a good day for the United States, and I look forward to going on to the next stage and to working right through until we get Dr. Foster confirmed.

Q. Mr. President, what are you going to do if the—

The President. I would like for Dr. Foster to say something, too.

Dr. Foster. I, too, would like to thank the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee for a fair hearing and for moving this forward to the full Senate. I also particularly want to thank the person on that committee who knew me best, Senator William Frist, for supporting my nomination. And lastly, I want to thank the President, his administration, congressional Members, and my family for supporting me so stoutly during these times.

Bosnia

Q. Mr. President, what are you going to do if the U.N. peacekeepers are harmed in Bosnia by the Serbs? They have threatened to retaliate on the bombing.

The President. We'll have to examine their actions as they take them. The United States is in a—I want to make clear the position we're in here. We, as a part of and a leader of NATO, responded to the request of the United Nations,

which I thought was very appropriate, to deal with the shelling of Sarajevo and the shelling of civilians by the Bosnian Serbs, in clear violation of the understandings that have been in place for quite some time now. And we did that in an appropriate way against military targets, so that the taking of hostages as well as the killing of civilians by them is totally wrong and inappropriate, and it should stop.

The United Nations, the forces on the ground and the United Nations Command obviously will have to analyze these circumstances on a daily basis. We will work with them, and we'll do whatever is appropriate. And I still believe that the action we took was appropriate. It was in response to the request from the U.N., and it certainly was provoked by the inappropriate shelling of civilians by the Bosnian Serbs.

Q. Do you have a backup plan if something happens? You're sending an aircraft carrier to the Adriatic. Does that have a—

The President. I can't comment any further on what's going on now. I think it's important for the United Nations, who have the forces on the ground, to be able to deal with this situation. And as the events unfold, I'll be happy to comment.

China

Q. Mr. President, why are you giving China MFN again, sir?

The President. Well, I haven't made a decision on that yet. But as you know, I said last year—and I believe—that we should continue to press China on the human rights issues, but I don't believe that singling China out on the MFN is necessarily the best way to do it. There are other countries with whom we have human rights differences as well. And we have certainly pressed our differences with China, not only person-to-person, face-to-face with the Chinese but also in the appropriate international forum, and we will continue to do that.

And we also have other differences with them. I agreed to let President Li from Taiwan come here. I thought that was the appropriate thing to do. We won't always agree with the Chinese, but I think it's important that when we disagree, we do it in the right way, aggressively and forthrightly, but in the proper forum.

Bosnia

Q. President Yeltsin has called Mr. Major and Mr. Kohl complaining about the—[inaudible]—has he tried to reach you, and what would you tell him?

The President. Not yet, no. If he did, I would tell him just what I told you, that the United Nations asked for this; they certainly weren't put up to it, that the Bosnian Serbs went way beyond the bounds of acceptable conduct. There have been clear restrictions on bombing civilians and shelling those areas for a long time now. I would ask him to call the Serbs and tell them to quit it and tell them to behave themselves and that this would not happen.

Surgeon General Nominee Foster

Q. Are the Democrats ready to overcome a filibuster on the Foster nomination if it happens?

The President. The Democrats are not numerous enough to overcome a filibuster. But Sen-

ator Frist and Senator Jeffords put their country above their party today and did what they thought was right, and I think there will be others. There may even be some who may not think they should vote for him, Dr. Foster, who believe that it's wrong to filibuster a nomination of this kind.

In the past, when the Democrats were in the majority in the Senate, they often did that as well. They often gave Republican Presidents votes on their nominees, even if they didn't agree with them. This—it would be unusual and unwarranted if this fine man were denied his day in court in the Senate, and I don't believe the American people want that to happen, and I don't believe that a majority of the Senate wants that to happen.

Q. What are you doing for the rest of the day?

The President. Working. [Laughter]

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:33 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. During the exchange, a questioner referred to President Boris Yeltsin of Russia, Prime Minister John Major of the United Kingdom, and Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's Radio Address

May 27, 1995

Good morning. It has now been over 5 weeks since the tragic bombing in Oklahoma City. In the days immediately after that tragedy, congressional leaders pledged to have the legislation I proposed to crack down on terrorism on my desk by Memorial Day. The Senate is now considering the antiterrorism bill. I'm glad they're working on it. At the same time, I disagree with the position of some Senators from both parties that three crucial weapons in the fight against terrorism should be stripped from the bill.

The first concerns my proposal to expand the wiretap capabilities of Federal investigators. Terrorists move around. They don't want to be caught. They go from State to State, from motel to motel, from pay phone to pay phone. We

need the power to move our taps and surveillance as fast as the terrorist moves his base of operations. But those who want to weaken my antiterrorism bill want law enforcement to go back to court for a new wiretap order each and every time a terrorist moves, unless we can specifically show that he's trying to evade our surveillance.

We should protect citizens' privacy rights. But we shouldn't force law enforcement to lose valuable time by making them get a court to agree that a terrorist is trying to knowingly evade us. Have you ever heard of a terrorist who wasn't trying to evade the police? I don't care whether a terrorist is trying to knowingly evade the police. I care that he or she may be trying to